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The CIA's Cloak-and-Dagger 'Scholars'

Two separate items in *The New York Times* the other day underscored the seriousness of a problem that has been deeply troubling scholars in the behavioral sciences ever since the Project Camelot scandal exploded last year.

Project Camelot was an Army-funded project to study conditions of social change and unrest in underdeveloped countries. It was designed, in the words of its Pentagon director, to "help us to predict potential use of the American Army in any number of cases where the situation might break out." Large numbers of independent American and foreign scholars were enlisted, or were scheduled to be enlisted, to carry out research in a number of countries overseas. When the intent and the sponsorship of the project became known in Chile last year, there was an outburst of nationalist resentment that deeply embarrassed U.S.-Chilean relations and led to abrupt cancellation of the whole multimillion dollar program.

The repercussions of Project Camelot and of other programs in which supposedly independent

scholars have been pressed into the service of U.S. military and intelligence agencies were reflected in a warning delivered at a meeting of the American Anthropological Association at Pittsburgh last Thursday. Dr. Ralph L. Beals, professor of anthropology at the University of California, said that secrecy and pressures from government intelligence agencies were eroding the effectiveness and prestige of American scholarly research abroad. He said that some American scholars already have been subjected to "increasing restrictions" on their work overseas.

The seriousness of the problem Dr. Beal defined was borne out by a news item from Guatemala in the same issue of the *Times* that carried the report of the Pittsburgh meeting. It reported that an American archaeologist, Robert E. Moran, of Salt Lake City, was killed by two Guatemalans who thought he was a United States intelligence agent.

The Guatemalans may have been mistaken. But that does not help Mr. Moran, or other U.S. scholars whose work has been handicapped

and whose very lives are endangered because of the known association of some American scholars with intelligence and related activities.

Project Camelot is dead and is not likely to be resurrected. The Pentagon has probably learned its lesson. But the CIA continues to maintain large numbers of talented scholars on its payroll, many openly; some, no doubt, secretly.

CIA apologists argue that most of the agency's work is open and clean. This may well be. But the problem is that the few who are secret, those who carry out the "dirty" work that is a relatively small but vital part of the Intelligence Agency's total effort, serve practically to contaminate all scholars, in and out of government service, in the eyes of those with whom they must work. Isn't it time the cloak-and-dagger function was isolated from the larger and different task of accumulating and digesting open intelligence so that all American scholars once more can function freely and in the open, the only atmosphere conducive to sound and vigorous scholarship?